



ALAMEDA COUNTY
CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP

FALL 2024 NEWSLETTER

Meet the Board of Directors

The Alameda County Resource Conservation District Board of Directors is a dedicated group of professionals united by their commitment to agriculture and conservation. Led by Board President, Karen Sweet, whose extensive experience includes helping to establish the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition and serving as a coordinator for the Leopold Conservation Award Program, the board brings together a wealth of knowledge and passion. Members like Treasurer Brenda Vieux, whose family has over a century of ranching heritage, and Katie Connolly, a fifth-generation rancher, and attorney, contribute vital perspectives on land stewardship and legal advocacy for sustainable practices. Board Vice President, Michael Frederick, has been working to preserve open space and habitat through his work with the Tri-Valley Conservancy and continues in this current role. Longtime conservationist Dick Schneider adds



depth with his expertise in urban growth initiatives, while Carol Garberson, a retired dietitian and conservationist is focused on restoring native habitats. The newest member of the board, Merry Carter, is a member of a historic ranching family, and champions innovative conservation projects. Through their collective

knowledge and diverse perspectives, they work to promote long-term stewardship of the land in Alameda County. Their volunteer roles are essential in addressing the challenges posed by urbanization, climate change, and the evolving needs of local communities while ensuring that the county's agricultural heritage remains strong and its ecosystems thrive.

This issue

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- WORKSHOP ALERT!
- Urban Agriculture & Small Farms



Funding

- [NRCS EQIP Program](#) accepts applications on a rolling basis with periodic review deadlines. The next review deadline is 11/15/24. For Alameda County please email: District Conservationist, Verónica M. Rivera Vega veronica.rivera@usda.gov
- [NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program \(CSP\)](#) now accepting applications. For Alameda County please email: Soil Conservationist, Dr. Rosemary Collins rosemary.collins@usda.gov



Soil Sampling & Testing Workshop

LET’S DIG INTO IT!

Join the Alameda County Conservation Partnership on Tuesday, December 3rd from 10am - 12pm, for an educational workshop about soil sampling and testing for farmers! This event is especially for those new to farming or who have not been trained in soil sampling protocols.

Learn more
& Register



Urban Agriculture & Small Farms

We may be known for our decades of rangeland conservation support to ranchers in Alameda County, but did you know we also work with small farms and urban producers? In 2015, recognizing the lack of resources tailored for urban farmers, the Conservation Partnership began the Urban Farms Mini-Grant Program. Since then, that work has expanded to include additional funding opportunities and technical assistance for urban farmers, including the recent creation of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office of Urban Agriculture in Alameda County. There are more than 45 urban farms in the County that grow fresh produce for their local communities, provide opportunities for community engagement and education, and create urban oases of biodiversity and green space.

Small farms on the urban border also play an important role in supplying fresh, local produce to neighboring communities. The Sunol AgPark, home to six small farms, distribute their produce throughout the East Bay to grocery stores, restaurants, CSA farm boxes, and farmer’s markets. The AgPark is an 18-acre property managed through a unique partnership between the ACRCD and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC). AgPark farmers collectively grow more than 150 different crops and manage their farms using organic, regenerative agriculture practices. The AgPark is home to beautiful California native plant hedgerows that provide pollinator and wildlife habitat and serves as an important land access opportunity for small farmers in Alameda County.

To read more about the farmers, visit: <https://acrcd.org/projects/sunol-agpark/sunol-agpark-farmers/>

“Urban agriculture is a vital food resource for Alameda County’s most marginalized to access food and grow community”

COLLEEN HOTCHKISS
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE SPECIALIST

